MARCH 1998

Louisiana
COAST LINES

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Office of Coastal Restoration and Management

Meet the Staff --Part V

The Biological Monitoring Section (BMS) is responsible for the management of all biological monitoring activities under La. R.S. 49:214.4 and the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA). This includes monitoring plan development, implementation (data collection and storage, statistical analysis, quality control, and data interpretation), and report generation.

These activities provide a scientific evaluation of the effectiveness of each coastal wetland restoration project in achieving long-term solutions to arresting coastal wetlands loss in Louisiana.

The monitoring efforts generate results that can aid in determining the success or failure of existing projects, in the beneficial modification of existing projects, and support future decisions on selection of projects proposed for creating, restoring, protecting, and enhancing Louisiana's coastal wetlands.

The BMS section currently has 27 personnel with a total of 28 positions. Greg Steyer, Natural Resource Geoscience Program Manager, oversees the section. He received a B.S. degree in Biology from the University of Maryland, College Park in 1985 after spending a year at Horn Point Environmental Laboratories, University of Maryland, studying submerged aquatic vegetation. Greg received his a M.S. degree in Biology, specializing in wetland ecology, from the University of Southwestern Louisiana in 1988. He worked for the Baltimore District of the Corps of Engineers for one year prior to accepting a position at DNR in 1989. Greg's current activities within CRD include developing, implementing,

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Biological Monitoring Section, Baton Rouge Office: L-R, Christopher Thomas (student), Greg Steyer, Sharon Ferris, Dan Llewellyn.

Biological Monitoring Section, Abbeville Field Office: L-R, top row, Christine Thibodeaux, David Soileau, Jr., Dona Weifenbach, Karl Vincent, Ralph Libersat. L-R, bottom row, David Castellanos, Mike Miller, Chad Courville.

and managing both the state and federal wetland restoration monitoring programs. He is married and enjoys volleyball, rock climbing, white water rafting, and traveling. Greg has worked at DNR for nine years.

Dan Llewellyn is a Natural Resources Geoscience Specialist III. He earned his B.S. degree from Rutgers in 1970 and his M.S. degree from Southeastern Louisiana University in 1992. Dan enjoys woodworking and furniture making. He has been working at DNR for six weeks.

Sharon Ferris provides all administrative support for the Biological Monitoring and Database Analysis sections of CRD. She maintains databases for all contracts, budgets, projects, as well as monitoring activity spreadsheets. Sharon has two sons and enjoys yoga, vintage dancing, bicycle riding, camping, and mountain climbing. She has worked at DNR for six months.

Ralph Libersat is the Abbeville Field Office Natural Resources Geoscience Supervisor. The Abbeville Field Office consists of eight personnel who are responsible for the monitoring of all state and CWPPRA projects west of the Atchafalaya Basin to determine if goals and objectives are being met. Ralph received his B.S. in Agronomy from McNeese State University. He enjoys duck hunting, bow hunting, and golf. Ralph has worked at DNR for seven years.

Charles Michael (Mike) Miller is a Natural Resources Geoscience Specialist II. He is responsible for the development of CWWPRA monitoring plans, monitoring of coastal restoration projects, report writing, statistical analysis, and data management for existing and upcoming federal/state monitoring projects. Mike received his B.S. degree in Wildlife Management from McNeese State University. He enjoys fishing, hunting, traveling, and summer weather. Mike has worked at DNR for five years.

Chad J. Courville is a Natural Resources Geoscience Specialist I. He is responsible for monitoring coastal restoration projects to determine project effects on vegetation, wildlife and fisheries, and water quality. Chad received his B.S. degree from USL. He enjoys dog training, hunting, fishing, and golf. Chad has worked at DNR for over two years.

Christine Thibodeaux is a Natural Resources Geoscience Specialist II. She is responsible for the monitoring of coastal restoration projects to determine project effects on vegetation growth and productivity,

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wildlife and fisheries productivity, water quality, and sediment accretion. Christine has worked at DNR for over three years.

Dona Weifenbach is a Natural Resources Geoscience Specialist III. She is responsible for designing and writing reports, and collecting data for coastal restoration projects to determine project effects on vegetation growth and productivity, wildlife and fisheries productivity, water quality, and sediment accretion and elevation. Dona received her B.S. degree in Horticulture from USL and her M.S. degree in Biology from USL. She has worked at DNR for four years.

David Soileau, Jr. is a Natural Resources Geoscience Specialist I. He monitors coastal restoration projects to determine project effects on vegetation growth and productivity, water quality, and sediment accretion. Dave received his B.S. degree in Wildlife Management from USL and his M.S. degree in Wildlife Science from LSU. He enjoys hunting and fishing. Dave has worked at DNR for three months.

Biological Monitoring Section, Thibodaux Field Office: L-R, back row, Al Alonzo, Chris Borron Bill Boshart. L-R, bottom row, Mary Anne Townson, Lori Ziehr, Darin Lee.

David Castellanos is a Natural Resources Geoscience Specialist II. He is the monitoring manager, whose duties include collecting water quality, sediment, and vegetation data related to restoration projects. He is also responsible for analyzing the data and preparing reports. David received his B.A. degree in Biology from UNO and his M.S. degree in Biology from USL. He enjoys canoeing, cycling, and the collection and culture of reptiles and amphibians. David has worked at DNR for about one year.

Karl A. Vincent is a Natural Resources Geoscience Specialist III. He received his B.S. and M.S. degrees in Biology from USL in 1979 and 1982. He also did some post-graduate training in plant systematics at the City University of New York and New York Botanical Garden from 1984 – 1990. Karl's job duties include the preparation and implementation of monitoring plans for completed CWPPRA projects. He also conducts the fieldwork necessary to monitor restoration projects in accordance with approved monitoring plans, and prepares progress and comprehensive reports on monitoring activities at assigned projects. Karl enjoys gardening, bird watching, hiking, bike riding, and playing guitar. He has worked at DNR for seven years.

Darin M. Lee is a Natural Resources Geoscience Supervisor. He supervises five personnel in the Thibodaux Field Office. He earned his B.S. degree in Wildlife Conservation from Louisiana Tech University in 1987 and his M.S. degree in Wildlife Ecology from Mississippi State University in 1991.

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His field office is responsible for the planning, development, management, collection, and analysis of coastal resources and impacts of projects and programs on these resources. Darin enjoys hunting, fishing, and basketball. He has worked at DNR for two months.

William (Bill) Michael Boshart is a Natural Resources Geoscience Specialist II. He received his B.S. and M.S. degrees from SLU. Bill performs resource management for CRD, which entails biological monitoring of coastal wetlands. He enjoys all topics of Biology and Natural History, as well as fishing, backpacking, and nature writing. Bill has worked at DNR for two months.

Biological Monitoring Section, New Orleans Field Office: L-R, back row, Ed Haywood, John Troutman, Shannon Holbrook, Tom O'Neil. L-R, front row, Norm Davidson, Keith Millet.

Chris Borron is a Natural Resources Geoscience Specialist I. He received his B.S. degree in Wildlife and Fisheries from LSU in 1996. Chris plans, develops, manages, and implements scientific studies for projects pertaining to coastal restoration. He also collects and analyzes scientific data pertaining to coastal restoration. Chris enjoys sports and fishing. He has worked at DNR for almost one year.

Lori Ziehr is a Natural Resources Geoscience Specialist II. She received her B.S. degree from Texas A&M University and her M.S. degree from Texas Tech University. Lori's job entails the development of monitoring plans, monitoring coastal restoration projects, and report writing. She has worked at DNR for three months.

Al Alonzo is a Natural Resources Geoscience Specialist III. His job duties entail the collection and analysis of biological, geological, and hydrological data. Al has worked at DNR for three years.

Mary Anne Townson is a Natural Resources Geoscience Specialist III. She earned her B.S. degree in Biology Education with a minor in Chemistry and her M.Ed. degree in Biology Education. She has also completed more than 40 hours above master-level work. Mary Anne works on data collection and analysis concerning barrier island ecology as well as other ecology projects. She enjoys reading, nature photography, computer graphics, and biking. Mary Anne has worked at DNR for two years.

Ed Haywood is the Natural Resources Geoscience Supervisor for the Biological Monitoring Section's New Orleans Field Office (temporarily located in Baton Rouge). Ed earned his B.A. degree in Biological Sciences with a minor in Chemistry from UNO in 1991 and his M.S. degree in Biological Sciences from UNO in 1993. He supervises five personnel in data collection and monitoring of coastal

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restoration projects, especially in the area of freshwater diversions. Ed enjoys sports, physical fitness, and home improvement. He has worked at DNR for four years.

Norman Davidson is a Natural Resources Geoscience Specialist II. He received his B.S. degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Science from LSU in 1993. In 1996, Norman earned a M.S. degree in Fisheries from LSU, with minors in Experimental Statistics and wildlife. Norman performs environmental modeling and data analysis pertaining to freshwater diversions in Plaquemines Parish as well as other coastal restoration projects in southeastern Louisiana. He enjoys fishing, hunting, running, basketball, reading, and chess. Norman has worked at DNR for one year.

Shannon Holbrook is a Natural Resources Geoscience Specialist III. She attended the University of Southern Mississippi from 1986 – 1988 and earned her B.S. degree in Marine Biology from the University of West Florida. Shannon serves as monitoring manager for coastal restoration projects and as quality assurance officer for the New Orleans Field Office. She enjoys camping, hunting, fishing, swimming, cross-stitching, and making crafts. Shannon has worked at DNR for nearly four years.

Keith Edward Millet is a Natural Resources Geoscience Specialist II. He received his B.S. degree in Wildlife Management from LSU in 1996 with a minor in Zoology and his M.S. degree in Wildlife from LSU in 1997. He performs biological monitoring of freshwater diversions and other coastal restoration projects affecting the Barataria Basin and other regions of southeastern Louisiana. Keith enjoys sports, hunting, and camping. He has worked at DNR for six months.

Tom O'Neil is a Natural Resources Geoscience Specialist II. He earned his B.S. degree in Biology from the University of Kentucky and his M.S. in Wildlife from LSU. Tom performs biological and hydrological monitoring of state and federal coastal restoration projects that protect, enhance, or create marsh in coastal Louisiana. Tom enjoys most outdoor activities, especially hunting, fishing, scuba diving, volleyball, and horse-manship. He has worked at DNR for one year.

John Troutman is a Natural Resources Geoscience Specialist II. He received his B.S. degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Science (with an Aquaculture option) from LSU and his M.S. degree in Natural Fisheries with a minor in Applied Statistics from LSU. John enjoys fishing, hunting, basketball, and softball. He has worked at DNR for one year.

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May Is Wetlands Month

• May 1 - Governor M.J. Mike Foster's
State Proclamation - Louisiana State Capital

• May 9 - Wetlands' Media Summit
Jean Lafitte National Historical Park & Preserve

1998 -- Year of the Ocean

1998 has been declared Year of the Ocean by the United Nations in recognition of the many challenges and opportunities offered by the ocean as we enter the 21st century. The ocean affects our weather and climate, provides a home to fisheries, which are a major food source for the world, and is largely unexplored in its depths. As the world population and standard of living grows, nations need to understand the impact of the ocean and the importance of sustainable use of ocean resources.

The immense impact of the ocean on all nations was particularly strong in 1997 as one of the strongest El Niños impacted weather all over the globe, and toxic algal blooms poisoned fisheries in many U. S. coastal areas. These and other events have prompted a global wake-up call that lends urgency to the U.N. declaration. The U.S. Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is taking a leading role in the U.S. Year of the Ocean effort to promote public awareness and understanding of the ocean.

"One out of every six jobs in the United States is marine related," said Commerce Secretary William M. Daley "What's more, 95 percent of U.S. foreign trade passes through U.S. ports and harbors in ships. One-third of our gross domestic product is produced in coastal areas through fishing, transportation, recreation, and related industries."

More than half of the U.S. population lives within 50 miles of the coast and 40 percent of new commercial development in recent years has occurred near the coast. "As part of the Department of Commerce, NOAA is responsible for working with states and private industry to show how development can proceed while critical environmental issues are addressed," said NOAA Administrator D. James Baker.

"Shifts in weather patterns associated with El Niño are powerful reminders of how the ocean joins with the atmosphere to affect our lives," said Baker. "In addition, the recent outbreak of pfiesteria in the Chesapeake Bay and the loss of fisheries in San Francisco Bay caused by newly introduced organisms remind us of the vulnerability of the ocean."

The goal of Year of the Ocean is to raise public awareness about the importance and relevance of the ocean in our lives. It will also be an opportunity for governments, organizations, businesses and individuals to become involved in helping sustain the marine resources on which we depend.

NOAA is working with other federal agencies, state governments, the private sector, academia, and other groups to highlight Year of the Ocean activities. Other federal agencies involved include the Departments of Defense, Transportation, State, Interior, Energy, Agriculture, the National Science Foundation, NASA, EPA, FEMA, and the Maritime Administration. NOAA is also supporting the H. John Heinze III Center for Science, Economics and the Environment to develop a multi-stakeholder response to Year of the Ocean.

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CRD Enhances Website

DNR's Coastal Restoration Division has been working to enhance information available on its current website. As public interest and awareness in coastal restoration increase, so does the need for current information and knowledge about restoration efforts. The new website will be implemented in phases and will serve as a resource to provide quick access to restoration project information. The updated site was designed with a variety of user groups in mind. Whether you're looking for general knowledge about our coast, departmental matters, or the data being collected for an individual restoration project, the CRD website will put this information at your fingertips.

From the homepage, the contents will be subdivided into eight major headings:

History of CRD: Highlights important legislation which initiated DNR's coastal restoration activities. Beginning in 1981 with Act 41, progress is traced through the signing of the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act (CWPPRA) by President George Bush in 1990.

CRD Organization: Highlights the eight organizational sections within the Coastal Restoration Division. An overview of each section outlines its specific responsibilities. Implementation of future phases will include a customized page for each section which will provide more detail about its role in CRD.

CRD Publications: Includes documents such as the "1997 Evaluation Report to the U.S. Congress on the Effectiveness of Louisiana Coastal Wetland Restoration Projects," monitoring procedures, brochures and pamphlets, Christmas tree information, and programmatic documents.

Coast 2050 Initiative: Links to Coast 2050's homepage at www.dnr.state.la.us/crm/2050.ssi This is an information page about the comprehensive effort by federal, state, and local agencies to protect and sustain coastal resources for future generations. It provides an online brochure about Coast 2050, meeting schedules, points of contact, and program status.

Coastal Restoration Projects: Provides access to individual project information, including progress reports, monitoring plans, photos, and a timetable for project design and completion stages. This page also links to information about the Parish Coastal Wetlands Restoration Program (Christmas Tree Projects) and the DNR/NRCS/SWCC Vegetation Planting Program, where the history and facts about these programs are given.

Monitoring Data: Lists projects according to hydrologic basin and outlines the type of monitoring data collected for each project. Selecting a project will open its project page, where parameters for individual stations will be listed. Future development will provide access to the actual data collected at any of CRD's monitoring stations.

CWPPRA: Links to the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection, and Restoration Act homepage at www.lacoast.gov. This site includ-

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es general information about CWPPRA, reports and publications, and links to CWPPRA project information.

Information: Provides addresses, phone numbers, and internet links for DNR offices, federal agencies involved with CWPPRA, and other contacts on coastal issues.

As interest in restoring and protecting Louisiana's coastal wetlands increases, the CRD web pages will continue its growth and improvement as well. The initial phase of the website should be available by April, and additional pages will be published as they are constructed. Everyone is invited to learn more about coastal restoration projects by visiting the CRD web pages online at www.dnr.state.la.us/crm/coastres/crd/home.htm.

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May Symposium

On May 6, 1998 the Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office/Office of the Governor, in conjunction with the Louisiana Applied Oil Spill Research and Development Program, will sponsor and host a one-day symposium on Louisiana-sponsored oil spill research. The research symposium, referred to as the May Symposium, will be held at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center, Pennington Conference Center, 6400 Perkins Road, Baton Rouge, from 8:00 am – 5:00 pm. A broad range of topics will be discussed, from in-situ burning to sea bird colonies.

Ten projects as well as a Spill of Opportunity and special presentation will be showcased.

The May Symposium provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and allows scientists who have been funded through OSRADP the opportunity to highlight their research not only to other scientists, but also to a broad range of persons interested in oil spill research. One of the goals of the Oil Spill Coordinator's Office is to use such an event to encourage scientists, engineers, planners, and policy makers to develop a meaningful dialog on the multifaceted nature of the oil spill business.

For further information on the May Symposium, contact the Louisiana Applied Oil Spill Research and Development Program at (504) 388-3481 or 3477, or e-mail osradp@ibm.net.

This public document was published at a cost of $278.61. Two-thousand copies of this public document were published in this printing at a cost of $278.61. The total cost of all printings of this document including reprints is $278.61. This document was published by the Department of Natural Resources, P. O. Box 44487, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 70804, to inform the public about Coastal Zone Management under authority of 16 U.S.C. 1451, et seq., and La. R.S. 49:214.21 et seq. This material was printed in accordance with the standards for printing by state agencies established pursuant to La. R.S. 43:31.

Financial assistance was provided by the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972, as amended, administered by the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

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